

THE WAY TO BE CONTENT.

A Sermon appointed for
the Crosse, but preached in the
Cathedrall Church of S. PAUL
in LONDON, on Monday in
Whitson-week, being the 26.
day of May, *An. Dom.*

1634

By I O H N G O R E, Rector of
Wenden-lofts in *ESSEX.*



L O N D O N,

Printed by R. Bishop, for Thomas Alsborne, and are to bee
sold at his shop in *Pauls Church-yard*, at the Signe
of the *Green Dragon.* 1639.

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A Sermon appointed for
the Church, preached in the
Cathedral Church of St. Paul
in London, on Monday in
Whitsun-week being the 25.
day of May. 1650.

By JOHN GAVIN, Rector of
Wenden-john in Essex.



LONDON:
Printed by A. B. for I. B. at the sign of the
Red Lion in St. Dunstons Church-yard, at the sign
of the Green Dragon, 1650.



To the right Worshipfull,
Mr. JOHN PENRUDDOCK,
ESQVIRE,

One of his Majesties Iustices of the Peace
for the Countie of *WILTES*:

My truly honoured Friend.

Right Worshipfull,



GOD hath blest you ma-
ny and sundry wayes;
with a wise and under-
standing heart, with a
prudent and religious
wife, with sweet and hopefull children,
with a plentifull and prosperous estate;
Give me leave (as your Chaplain to God)

The Epistle Dedicatory.

to pray for one blessing more, as the Coronis and upshot of all the rest, and that is, that God would blesse you also, as I doubt not but he doth, with a contented mind in all these. This is the subject of my Sermon, and shall bee the supplication of my heart so long as ever I shall live to bee

Your poor unworthy Friend,

JOHN GORE.





THE WAY TO BE CONTENT.

PHILIP. 4. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to
bee content.*



THE last time I was in this place, I shewed you the way to Prosper: My errand is now to shew you the way to be Content; if you prosper not: Which, howsoever it may seem at this time an impertinent and improper Text; yet let mee premonish you what a Father said of Benjamins sack, *Sacco soluto, relaxit argentum*, When the sack was opened, the silver appeared; the silver was in it before, but it was not seene, nor known, nor taken notice of till the opening: So give me but leave to open my sack; to unfold, and enlarge and apply my meditations, and then if there

The way to be Content.

doe no silver appeare, if there bee nothing worthy your observation and use; bee but you content to hear it, and I will be content to bear it: For it is indeed a Text of Contentation, and you shall have (God willing) a Sermon of Contentment. I pray God of his mercie grant, that I may so divide it, and so dispense it, that it may profit and please, and give Content both to God and you. And so I come to my Text. *I have learned, &c.*

In which words, I will observe two generall parts, which may be reduced to two heads, and be thus expressed. 1. *Disciplina pacis*, the Discipline of peace, and that is to learn to be Content. 2. *Pax discipline*, the peace of the discipline, or the profit of this learning, and that is, It armes a man, and enables him to comply with all estates whatsoever. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

1. *Disciplina pacis*, the discipline of peace, so the Scripture termes it, *Esa. 53. 5. The discipline of our peace was upon him*, (1) Christ was disciplined and punished for us, that wee might have our peace without punishment. So some translate that place, *Psal. 2. ult.* whereas wee read, *Osculamini filium*, Kisse the Sonne, (2) doe honour and homage to the Some of God; some render it *Apprehendite disciplinam*, (3) apprehend his discipline, obey his ordinances, and submit your selves to his corrections, as hee submitted himselfe to ours; and this in the end will work for your peace. And to say truth, a man can never attain to a well-setled peace, nor grow up to a well-grounded contentation, till hee hath been some way disciplined by the hand of heaven, *Heb. 5. 8.* It is said

said of our Saviour, Though hee were a Sonne (the onely begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth) yet hee learned obedience by the things which hee suffered: not that hee was disobedient before hee suffered; but the meaning is, though he had the habit of obedience before, he never learned the practice of it till then. For this lesson of Contentment is just like your lessons of Musick, a man can never bee said to have learned them, till hee bee able to practise them; for you must know that Christians are of two sorts.

Some are *sykvestres*, or *onagri*, like wild unrulie Asses, (so the Scripture termes them, *Iob 11. 12.*) I mean unhumbled, untamed, unconverted sinners, that never yet felt the Yoke of Christ, nor the hand of God, nor the heaviness of a wounded conscience: these know no other Content but what their sports, their Musick and merry company affords them; which is just such a kind of Content as they that have the Itch doe take in clawing and scratching their bodies, which pleaseth them infinitely for the present, but makes them the sorer and the rawer, and the worser afterwards: for so all sinfull pleasure ends in pain; and if there be not *Ingrata recordatio*, an unpleasing, a discontenting remembrance of all such pleasing contenting vanities, the soule will rue for it in another place. These may fitly bee compared to the Lillies which our Saviour speaks of in the Gospell, saying that *Solomon* in all his glory came not near them; now the Lillie, as long as it is faire, whole, and untoucht, it looks beautifull, and smells pleasantly; but let it be never so little nipt, or bruised,

fed, or crush'd in a mans hand, it looks ugly, and smells worse: such are all your joviall Gallants, and lascivious youngsters, as long as they are healthful, & sound, and all nothing, their only care is to give themselves content, by hunting and hawking, by dicing and carding, by drinking and drabbing, &c. *sic o sic juvenes vivere*; to some mens thinking, no such contenting life in the world as theirs; till these men fall into the hands of God (as sooner or later they shall surely fall) and God doth begin to nip them, and bruise and crush them in his hands with sicknesse of body, or sorrows of soule; alas, all their Content is vanisht and gone, and they become like *Naomi* in *Bethlem*, neither pleasing to themselves nor others. These Contentments, are worne-eaten like *Tomas* Gourd, that will faile a man when he stands most in need of them; and these kind of men are far from that Content which my Text speaketh of.

But there are another sort of Christians, and they are *subacti*, or *ablactati*, mortified, subdued or weaned Christians, such as *David* was, *Psal.* 131. 2. *I have behaved my selfe like a child that is weaned, yea my soule is as a weaned child.* A child that sucks, his whole delight is to bee nibling at the brest; nothing quiets, nothing contents him but that; but let him once bee thoroughly weaned, and then though you shew him never so goodly a brest, abounding with never so luscious milke, and flatter him never so much, you shall not get him to take it, nor to touch it; for then his Content lies in another kind; it is something else must quiet him, and not that: So it is with a mortified and un-mortified Christian, nothing con-

tents

contents the one but the brest of the world ; nothing less than that contents the other. When the soule of a Christian is once weaned and taken off from the follies and vanities of this life, then hee begins to favour and set his mind upon the things that concerne a better life ; hee shall feel his disposicion alter within him, and shall find a more sensible content in enjoying his God, than any worldling upon earth either doth or can find in enjoying his goods : as David affirms, *Psal. 4. 8. Dedit illi lætitiā, &c. Thou hast put more gladnesse in my heart, than in the time that their corne and wine and oyle increased* : The meaning is, hee took more delight and more content in the Law and favour of God, in the worship and service of God, in conversing and walking with God ; more (I say) by far, than the men of this world could take in their joyfulest times of all, when their corne and wine and oyle increased. And this is the *medalla*, the pith and marrow of that Christian contentation, which is begun upon earth, and never ends in heaven. This is such a happinesse that none can attain unto, but onely they that are *Cribrati Christiani* (as *Tertullian* termes them) sifted Christians, they that have been winnowed and fanned, and sifted (as it were) by Gods afflictions, by the devils temptations, and by the worlds unkindnesses ; they that have been tossed and tumbled and beaten in the world, and have found by their own experience, that there is no content to bee had in any estate but onely from God ; and that there is no estate but God may bee had in, if a man will himselve ; these are they that have learned (with *St. Paul*) in whatsoever state they

are, therewith to be content. and so I come more neerly to the first principall part of my Text, wherein are three remarkeable points to be observed.

1 *Singularitas personæ*, the singularity and propriety of the person noted in the word *ego*, I have learned. 2 *Specificatio temporis*, the specification or intimation of the time when he learned it, noted in the word *quidam*, he doth not say, I will learn to be content, but I have learned; I have done it already. 3 *Specialitas rei*, the specialty or excellencie of the thing it selfe which St. Paul had learned and attained, and that was to be *εὐχαριστὸς*, selfe-sufficient, and what that meaneth, you shall heare by and by.

1 *Singularitas personæ*, I have learned. Some may haply conceit that S. Paul speaks but this of his own particular, that he for his part had learned to be Content; not that it is the common condition of every private Christian to bee thus qualified, thus contented: *Answ.* It is true, as S. Paul was an Apostle (and you know he was a great Apostle, *Apostolus per Antiochianum*, called by the name of *The Apostle* in all our quotations of him) I say, as he was an Apostle, he had his *ἰδια χάρισμα*, his peculiar gifts and graces proper to himselfe, not attainable nor imitable by us: but that he speaks here, hee speaks it as a Christian, as a Convert, as a contented man, & that's a grace thats common to every true beleever. The Scripture speaks of a *Common faith*, Tit. 1. 4. because it is common to all the faithfull; and so likewise of a *Common salvation*, Luke 3. because it is common to all that shall bee saved; which yet every Christian must labour to make proper to himselfe: so may this
be

be called a *Common contentment*, because it is such as every common Christian must apply to himselfe, and is bound in conscience to learn and practise for his own particular, for the comfort and discharge of his own soule in the sight of God. It is worth your observation that of *David*, *Psalm*, 40. 6. where he saith of himselfe, *In the volume of thy Book it is written of me, that I should doe thy will, O my God, I am content to do it*: now let a man read over the whole volume of Gods Book, he shal not find that it is written of *David*, that he by name should do the will of God more than another man. Why then doth *David* affirme this of himselfe? He tell you what I think the reason may bee: *David* found in the volume of Gods Book that it was thus written of men of his rank and quality, of Kings, Prophets, &c. that they should have a speciall care to doe the will of God, and to be exemplary in their lives to others; and this doth *David* appropriate and apply to himselfe in particular, as if it had been thus written of him, and none else but him. In like manner, when you reade in the volume of this Book that it is thus written of *Saine Paal*, that he had learned to bee Content, you must know that it is your case as well as his, and that you for your parts have as good cause, and as great reason (as ever *David* had) to apply this writing to your selves, and say for your own particular, *It is written of me, that I should be content, O my God, I am content to be so*. It was good counsell that *Eliphaz* gave to *Iob*, *Iob* 5. 27. *Hearc this, and know it for thy good* (so wee translate it) but in Hebrew it is (*dang-lecha*) *know it for thy selfe*. It is not enough for a man to know this

in generall, that such a thing must be, that every man must be content with his estate, because God will have it so; but a man must apply this knowledge to himselfe in particular, and labour to work himself to such an *inward*, such an inward tranquillity and contentednesse of mind, that nothing that God sends may come amisse to him. As *S. Austin* said of Alms, *Qui vult ordinare eleemosynas dare, debet a seipso incipere*; Hee that will give Almes in a right and orderly manner, must begin with himselfe. How is that? *Mendicat a te anima tua, esurit iustitiam, &c.* Thy owne soule lies begging of thee, it hungers after righteousness, it thirsts after grace, it's naked and wounded for want of spirituall cloathing and comfort; first begin with thy own soul, cherish that, comfort that, save and succour that, shew mercy first to thy selfe, then shalt thou the better know and understand how to shew mercie and pitie to the bodies and souls of others. In like manner, He that would goe the right way to true Contentment, must begin with himselfe, first studie his own peace, subdue his own passions, quiet his own mind, and content his own soule; and when he hath done so, he may then haply make his own plaister to serve anothers sores, and comfort others with the same consolation wherewith himselfe hath formerly been comforted and contented: but that can he never do, till hee be able to say of himselfe, what *St. Paul* doth in my Text: However others bee affected, *I* (for my part) have learned to be content. So much for the first particular, which is *singularitas personae*, the proprietic of the person, *124, I have learned &c.* The next is,

2. *Specif-*

2 Specificatio temporis; Hee doth not say, I will learn, but I have learned to be content. This is one of those *præcognita* (as wee call them) that must bee known and learned afore-hand, against the time that God will give occasion to make use of them. As the Prophet *Esay* exhorts, *Esa. 42: 23. Hearken to this, and hear it for the time to come*; though it may bee for the time present all things are so well with you, that you have no need, no use of this doctrine; yet the time may come (God knowes how soone) that you may be glad, and thank God that ever you heard it; doe not therefore hear it for the present only, (as most men do Sermons) but hear it for afterward, and lay it up for the time to come. For as *Tully* said of Poetry, that it was a profession for all times, prosperity and adversity; for all ages, youth and old age; for all places, at home and abroad: so is this a lesson for all times, all ages, all places; and happy are they that have learned it afore-hand, that they may not bee to seek when they shall stand most in need of it, but have a salve in readinesse for every sore. Was not that a sad and lamentable distresse that the people of *Israel* were driven to, *1 Sam. 13. 22. That in the day of Battell, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people, save only in the hand of Saul and Jonathan*? how did those unarmed people (*inermes in armis*) tremble and quake to meet their enemies in the faces? Even such is the case of an unprepared Christian, when troubles come upon him like an armed man, suddenly, and unresistably; what miserable plagues must he needs be driven to, that hath not learned afore-hand

to be content with any fortunes, and to repose and rowle himselfe upon his God in the worst events? When the world is full of fears and dangers, and calamities are ready to break in upon a people, what a taking are they in, that have not *learned to be content?* as David saith of those in a storme at sea, *Psal. 107. 27. They are even at their wits end, ready to run mad, and go besides themselves with astonishment and anguish of spirit*: whereas they that have learned St. Pauls lesson in my Text, can say to their soules as David did to his, *Psal. 116. Returne unto thy rest, O my soule*: they can readily turne themselves to God, who is *Centrum quietatorium* (as the School-men speak) and there find rest unto their soules (like Noah in his Arke) when a world of others are overwhelmed with a floud of sorrow. Beloved, wee are not worthy to know for what wee are reserved, nor how God will please to deal with us; let our care be therefore (like Mariners at Sea) in a calme to provide for a storme, in health provide for sicknesse, and in peace prepare for trouble: that if any unexpected trouble should arise, we may be able (with Gods mercy) to overcome it, and to wade contentedly and quietly through it; labour aforehand to ballast our soules with grace, that we may hold out stedfastly, unmoveably in this troublesome world. You know, that which must keep a Ship stiffe and steddie on the sea, must not be levers and shores without it, but weight and ballast within it: so that, that must keep a mans mind and conscience steddy and upright, that it do not *vacillare*, stagger and reel to and fro like a drunken man (as David speaks) it is not wealth and means without

without a man, but grace and godlinesse, and contentment within him; a man shall never be at quiet in his mind, never settled in his conscience, but alwaies tossed and turmoiled with doubts, and cares, and feares, till hee hath learned this lesson of the blessed Apostle, *in whatsoever state bee is, therewith to be content.*

3 *Specialitus rei*, the excellency of the thing it selfe, exprest in the word *αὐτάρκεια*. selfe-sufficient; if we take the word in a strict and proper sense, none can properly and rightly be said to be *αὐτάρκεια* selfe-sufficient, but onely God. As our Saviour told the young man in the Gospel, *Mar. 10. 18* when he called him *Good Master: why callest thou me good?* (saith Christ) *there is none good but God*: the meaning is, none that hath his goodnesse in selfe, *αὐτάρκεια* in himself, and from himselfe, but onely God; all the goodnesse that men have, comes down from God, as light doth from the Sunne, or water from the Spring; (though Christ were God too and therefore good, but that was more than the young man knew:) so there is none truly selfe-sufficient but God only, that hath this sufficiencie, this fulnesse of content in and from himselfe, without being beholding to any creature. Man of himselfe hath no sufficiencie, neither sufficient means to maintain him, nor sufficient strength to defend him, nor sufficient grace to save him, but all our sufficiencie is from God; *αὐτάρκεια* *αὐτάρκεια* *αὐτάρκεια*, who is sufficient for these things? is as true in other cases, as in the case of the Ministry: man of himselfe without God is not sufficient for any thing, as the Moon is but a dark body if

if the Sunne doth not look upon it; so is a man but a dead creature if God do not work in him; there is no light nor life in him. Yet such is the goodnesse of God, ^{and so} the good pleasure of his will (as the Apostle calls it) that when a man can so farre deny himselfe, so far matter and prevaile with himselfe, as to suffice and content himselfe with that *dimensum*, that portion which God hath allotted and assigned him, be it more or lesse, to esteeme it enough, and sufficient for him; such a one doth God account a man like himselfe, a man after his own heart, a man that is *avare*, self-sufficient.

And here I may take up Moses wish, and say, *I would to God that all the Lords people were thus affected, and thus minded. Are your minds set upon righteousnesse, O ye sonnes of men?* (saith David in the Psalm) No, wee may answer; and experience sheweth that mens minds are set upon covetousnesse, they are set upon the world, they are set clean crosse and contrary to the rule and direction of Almighty God. For thus the case stands, where God would have men to be covetous, there they are content; and contrarily, where God would have men to be content, there they are extremely covetous. In some things God would have men to bee covetous, in *Cor. 12. ult.* *Covet earnestly the best things*: the things of this life are the worst things in Gods account; howsoever wee esteeme them; those are the best things which belong and bring a man to a better life; and of these God would have us to be as covetous as we can be for our lives: *Covet* is the word, bee earnestly eagerly covetous; never think you have faith enough, never think
you

you have grace enough, never think you have wisdom and patience and godlinesse enough; but still labour, still hunger after more; Herein *exerce avaritiam tuam* (as St. *Austine* speaketh) if thou hast any covetousnesse in thee, exercise it this way, set it aworke about these things, for here a *sufficit* is deadly (as the same Father hath it). See now our crossness and perverseness to God; where we should be covetous, there we are too well contented; if we have never so little grace, never so little faith, never so little religion, &c. wee are ready to say with *Esau*, we have enough to serve our owne turns, we neither cover nor desire any more, like that Monk in St. *Bernard*, that set down this for his resolution, *nec peior fieri volo, nec melior esse cupio*, I will be no worse, neither do I desire to bee better; and so they stand at a stay like dwarfs, and never seek to encrease their talent. Just of *Gallioes* temper, *Att. 18. 17. Nihil eorum Gallioni cura*, *Gallio* cared for none of those things; nor do we care for any of these things; where we should be careful, wee are careless; and too well contented, where we should be covetous. Thus wee crosse God on the one side, by being content where wee should be covetous.

See now how we crosse him on the other side, by being covetous where we should be contented. As first in the matter of sinne: A man that hath been *considered*, a lover of pleasure, more than a lover of God, and hath followed the lusts, devices and desires of his own heart a long time together; God would have such a one to leave while he is well, to repent himselfe, and content himselfe with what is done

and past; &c. to sinne no more, lesse worse thing than he is aware of, fall upon him, *apostolus*, &c. (saith the Apostle) 1. Pet. 4. 3. *Let the times past of life suffice us, to have walked in lasciviousnesse, lusts, excessse of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable, idolatries: mark the word, let it suffice, or let it content you to have spent so much of your life in this ungodly and unprofitable manner: as if he should have said; ye have done enough, yee have had pleasure and sinne enough; leave while ye are well, be content now to break off that course, and begin a new one.* A man would think such meek, such moving counsell must needs take good effect: yet it is strange to see how unteasonable, how unsatiable men are in this kind; they can set no bounds to their appetites, no stint nor measure to their sinnes; they can never tell when they have sinned enough, never tell when they have drunk enough, never tell when they have angered God enough; but as the Apostle saith, *Ephes. 4. 19. They commit uncleannes even with greedinesse, *greediness* (as the originall word) with covetousnesse: no gripping, worldling is more greedy and covetous of money, than a wicked man is greedy and covetous of sinne, that he can never see when he hath enough of it; but still goes on to add sinne unto sinne, drunkennesse to thirst; and as a covetous man treasures up wealth, so doth a wicked man treasure up wrath for himselfe against the day of wrath, *Rom. 2. 5. Crastinum peccatum, bustie delinquent* (as Greg. Nissen said of the rich man in the Gospel) *they sinne to day for to morrow.* They study and devise and plot their sinne aforehand,*

hand, as if our Saviours saying were not so, *Mat. 6. ult. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.* Alas beloved, the best day that a man spends, or that day that a man spends best, he commits evils, and sins enough to repent of that day; (He warrant him) hee shall need no more to trouble him: yea, and happy too if hee can make even with God at night. Hee shall not need to bee so covetous, so greedy of sinne, hee shall one day have enough of it; perhaps ere he bee aware; he shall one day find what it is for a man to sinne *in suo eterno*, when he comes to rue for his sins, *in Dei eterno*. He that would sinne everlastingly, if he might live everlastingly, it is just with God that he should suffer everlastingly: Thus will God crosse sinfull men as bad as ever they crosse him, and teach them to bee covetous where they should bee contented.

Thus likewise doe men deale with God for the things of this life; God is all for contentednesse, and wee are all for covetousnesse. God saith, *If you have but food and raiment (though ye have little or nothing else) yet be content with it, 1 Tim. 6.* for why? it is more than we deserve, more than we are worthy of; more than God owes us; if he allow us but that, yea, if wee have but our daily bread (as our Saviour termes it) if God should so restrain us in our diet, and cut us short in our provision, as to allow us no more but bare bread, we have reason to be content with it, for wee have that wee prayed for; if God afford us more, we are bound to bee the more thankful, considering (with *Iacob*) that we are lesse than the least of all Gods mercies: there is not the least of Gods

mercies but it is too great and too good for us. And yet it is strange to see how few there be that thinke ill of themselves, and well of their estates; I mean, that are well contented with Gods allowance; but rather with the Prophets wife, *2 Reg. 4. 6.* who desired one vessell more when all was full before. Nay some are so unreasonable and unsatiable, that as the Prophet saith, *they enlarge their desire as hell*: some mans mind is like hell it self, which though it swallow up a world of soules, yet it is never satisfied, but still gapeth for more: that is the reason such a one can never be contented, because though he may have a house full of money, he can never have a heart full of money; for why? He hath a hell in his heart, that never can be filled with means nor monies. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart?* (saith Peter to Ananias, when he lied to the holy Ghost to save his money) *Act. 5. 3.* There is the hell in the heart; that man whose heart is filled with the devill, filled with covetousnesse & ungodlinesse, must needs have a hellish heart; yea, his heart is a hell it selfe, the very habitation and house of devils, and woe bee to that sinne that brings a hell into a mans heart in this world, and brings a mans heart and soule into hell in the world to come. Thus you see what comes of being covetous where God would have men to bee contented. Learn therefore from henceforth to set bounds to thy appetite, to moderate your cares for the things of this life, and to frame your desires to Gods appointment, and that is the way to be content.

I have not yet done with this point, for as I searched more narrowly into the originall word, I found
that

that ~~ant~~ goes before ~~apart~~, that selfe goes before sufficient; which put me in mind of another consideration, and that is this; namely, That a man must bee himselfe ere he can be sufficient: I mean, a man can never attain to any true, reall sufficiencie or contentment of mind til first he be himself. Every man is not himself; not only fools and mad-men and drunkards are not themselves (as we say), not their owne men; but every unconverted, unhumbled, unawakened sinner. As it is said of the Prodigall son, *Luke 15. 17.* that when hee was converted, *Then hee came to himselfe*; which implies that before that time, when he lived in riot and excesse, and in that wastfull way of wickednesse, when he was glad to feed upon those *filique demoniorum*, those husks of Devils which the Text speaks of, all that while he was not himself; he never began to come to himself, till he began to come to his Father: so to speak properly, a man never comes to himselfe, till hee come home to God by true repentance; he is never his own man til he be the Lords. Three things there be that make a man not himself, and consequently make him unsufficient & incapable of true contentment. 1. *Nabals* drunkennes. 2. *Nebuchadnezzars* madnesse. 3. *Sarans* villenage. That is the reason that the Scripture compares unregenerate men to drunkards & mad-men and slaves, who of all others are truly said to bee not themselves. *St. Paul* saith, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* that a Minister that hath to doe with refractory sinners, must wait, if at any time God will give them repentance, *ita ut vincent*, that they may awake out of their drunken sleep, and become sober (so the word signifies:) implying, that as long as

we muzzle our selves in our ignorance, and goe on secretly in our finnes, not grieving for them, nor striving against them, not making conscience to reform them; all that while we are like drunken sots, void of understanding, we are not our selves. And as there is a wet drunkenesse, too common in these daies, God forgive the world that sinne; so there is ^{upon a while} a kind of dry drunkenesse (as the Prophet saith in another sense, *Esay 51.21. Thou art drunk, but not with wine*.) Every sin that a man is bewitched unto, doth for the time so infatuate and besot him, that he is not himselfe, hath not power over himself to refrain or repent of it, till God awake a man out of this same drunken sleep, and give him wisdom to see into his sins, and grace to forsake them; Then, and not till then doth hee come to himselfe. Now as some are not themselves through drunkenesse, so others are not themselves through madnesse. *The heart of man* (saith *Salomon Eccles. 9.3.*) *is full of evill, and madnesse is in his heart while he lives.* Now mad men are of two sorts. 1. Some are *furētes* furious or raging mad: like those Pharisees, *Luk. 9.11.* that were filled with madnesse at the sight of the miracles which Christ wrought, or like those that stoned *Stephen. Act. 7.54.* *They gnashed upon him with their teeth,* ^{disagreement} (is the word) they grated and ground their teeth at him, as if they had been cutting with a saw, (for so the word signifies) they were so mad & devilish, that they could have found in their hearts to have sawed him and torn him with their teeth. Such mad men as these, let them be never so little stirred, or provoked, or crost either by God or man, how bitterly

terly doe they curse and swear, and rage and damne themselves to the pit of hell, that it would make a mans heart ake, and his soule tremble to hear and see it, for feare lest God should take them at their words; *Cursed bee their anger, for it is fierce, and their rage, for it is cruell, Gen. 49. 7.* 2. Others are *Amonites*, foolish-mad, *I have said of laughter, thou art madnesse* (saith *Salomon*.) Is it not a mad thing for a man to laugh when hee should weep, to sing and shout when he should sob and sigh, to make himself merry with that which makes God and his Angels sorry? Though we account this cheerfulness the H. Ghost accounts it madnesse, *Lachrymarum causas tripudiantes peragunt, & videntes mortis negotium exequuntur* (saith a Father). They that make a sport of sinne, doe but dance a Galliard about the brink of hell; and if that be not the madnesse of folly, judge yee. Too many such mad men there are in the world of both these sorts and kinds; I pray God of his mercy convert them and bring them into a better mind, that they may see and bewaile their own miserable estate through sin before God, and so may come to themselves; for yet they are not themselves, and consequently can never attain to any true contentment. Add hereunto, those that are the servants and slaves, the drudges and vassals of sin and Sathan. You know a servant is *totum alterius*, is not his own man, is not a man of himselfe: Even so, and more than so is hee that is the servant of sin. *My brethren* (saith *S. James*) *bee not many masters, Jam. 3. 1.* Every man naturally hath *πολλὰ δικάζοντες* many masters in himselfe; every temptation, every sinne, every lust is a wicked mans master;

master; pride comes, and that masters him, then comes anger and that masters him, then comes covetousnesse or worldlinesse or filthy uncleannesse; all these get the mastery of him, and keep him in subjection that he is not himselfe. *O quam multos Dominos habet, qui unum non habet!* Oh how many masters and Lords hath that man that hath not thee O God, for his Lord and master! the very devell himselfe is his master, yea more than that, he is his god: therefore he is called the god of this world, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* And why the god of this world? mee thinks that should be too high, too happy, too honourable a title for so base a fiend: doubtlesse the reason is this; because as God at the beginning did but speak the Word, and it was done, *Gen. 1.* so if the devell doth but speak the word (as it were), but give the least hint of any sinne that he would have committed and done, presently they doe *ἰναρῖν ἰναρῖν*, seek opportunity to bring it to passe: at such a beck are wicked men to the mortall enemy of their soules.

Can any man say, or doth any man think that these men are themselves, or that they can enjoy true contentment? Alas no; for their case is just as the *Israelites* was in *Egypt*, who when they had wrought hard in the Brick-kilns all day, were well whipt and beaten for their labours at night: or as *Sampson* among the *Philistims*, who after hee had laboured and ground like a horse in the mill all day, was put into the prison-house at night; And what content could either of these take in their worke or in their wages? Thus will *Sathan* serve them that serve him; after they have wrought hard in the works of darknesse the whole

whole day of their lives, when the night of death comes (without great mercy on Gods part, & great repentance on their own part) they shall be sure to be cast into the prison of hell, and there whipt and tormēted everlastingly for their paines. And if there be any content in such a worke, or in such wages, judge ye. By this, you perceive there is more belongs to self-sufficiency, than perhaps you are aware of; there may be self-love, self-will, or self-pleasing, or self-conceit, where there is no true grace nor feare of God: but there will be no self-sufficiency, no solid contentment, till a man be delivered from *Nabals* drunkennesse, from *Nebuchadnezzars* madnesse, and from Satans villinage, and so be truly converted, and and come to himselfe; for there must be a conversion, before there can be any contentation; never looke to be contented, till first thou be converted, and come home to God, and to thy selfe; for ^{avids} must be before ^{apms} self, before sufficient.

Hence then I observe foure *corollaries* or singular circumstances touching the nature and quality of this self-sufficiencie; that it is.

1. *Res seria*, a serious thing; as *Seneca* said of true joy, (*mibi crede, res severa est verum gaudium*) so may I say of true contentment, it is not a light and frothy, but a grave and weighty thing; he that would be truly contented, must sit downe and consider seriously with himself, in what tearmes hee stands with God: for such as a mans conscience is to God-ward, such is his contentment to him self-ward. *There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God, Esay 57. 21.* a wicked man can have no comfort nor content. Why? *For he is*

like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt (saith the Prophet in the same place;) and why like the troubled sea, & not like the troubled ayre? for the same wind troubles both; The reason is, because when the ayre is troubled, if the wind do but cease, it is presently calmed; so is the heart of a godly man; when his troubles are over, his heart is presently at rest; but a wicked mans heart is like the sea; which when the winds are layed, and there is no outward thing to trouble it, it still workes and foames, and troubles it selfe with its owne motion; so though a wicked man have nothing outwardly to trouble him, yet his owne unquiet heart troubles it self, and will not suffer him to be at peace. Take this for a Maxime, that a wicked man can never be a contented man. Try thy selfe therefore whether thou be *filius pacis* a sonne of peace, or *filium ira* a child of wrath; looke well into thy selfe to see how the case stands betwixt thy soule and thy God: if upon inquiry thou findest that God and thee are friends, then goe thy way (as Solomon saith Eccl 9.7.) *Eate thy bread with joy, & drinke thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy workes*: if otherwise thou be one that livest at variance with God, then change thy note and say *Dröop O my soule, hang downe thy head and heart, be in bitterness of spirit: In hare penitentia usque ad finem vita* (*Amb*) *repent and mourne to the very death; never suffer one cheerefull thought in thy heart, one cheerefull looke in thy face, one cheerefull word in thy mouth, till thou hast reconciled thy self to God, and made thy peace with heaven; never seek to give thy self content, till first thou hast given thy God*
con-

content, for all the sinnes wherewith thou hast grieved and discontented him. Let no man therefore be mistaken in the matter of contentment, to think that it is a wanton and a lascivious thing; hee that truly learnes it, shall find that it is *Res seria*, a weighty and a serious thing.

2. It is *Res sacra*, a holy thing, therefore the Apostle, 1 Tim. 6.6. joynes Godlinesse and contentment together; to shew that none can be a contented man, but he that is a godly man. *A stranger* (saith Salomon) doth not intermeddle with this joy, Prov. 14. 10. *he that is a stranger to God, and a stranger to godlinesse, hath nothing to do with true contentednesse.* In which respect the Apostle saith, that God giveth to the godly *ad idcirco* all things richly to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6. 17. It is one thing to use a thing, another to enjoy it; a wicked man may use the creatures, & the ordinances & blessings of God; but he cannot be said to enjoy them; for that imports a sweet and sanctified use of them, which is the gift of God only. to them that are godly: and it is certaine, no man in the world takes so much content in his meates and drinckes, and lawfull recreations, as a godly man doth, for he enjoys God in all these. Contrarily, *The joy of the wicked* (saith Salomon elsewhere) *hath a share in it;* (i) a secret guiltinesse of sinne that strangles all their mirth, so that even in laughter their hearts are heavie. It followes then, that as that was the best wine that was of Christs making, John 2. when he turned the water into wine; so that is the best content that is of Gods making, when he turnes our carnall joy into a spirituall joy, and minglcth heavenly content with

earthly. Let no man therefore have a misopinion of contentment, as if it were a sensuall or carnall thing; for he that truly understands it, shall find that it is *Res sacra*, a sacred and holy thing.

3. It is *Res pretiosa*, a precious thing; not only as tis said, 1 Sam. 3. 1. That the word of God was precious in those dayes; that is, rare, usuall, and seldome heard of: for so is contentment too; it is a rare thing to finde a contented man; but it is *Rarum* and *Charum* too, not only precious for the rarity and strangeness of it, but for the worth and excellency of it: as the blood of Christ is called precious blood, for the worth and excellency of it, above all other blood, for one drop of it was able to redeeme a world; in this sence is true content a precious thing; its indeede the onely *ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις* the onely heaven upon earth that this world affords, without which a man is even dead while he liveth, and many times through griefe and discontent, is even ready (as *Iob* speaks) to choose strangling and death, rather than life, *Iob. 7. 15.* Let a mans house be never so well situated, never so well furnisht, and fairly built, if he have no content in it, it is but (as the City of refuge was said to be) *ἡ φυλακή* a prison without fetters; though it be not a place of durance, tis a place of bondage to him. Let a mans wife be never so vertuous, if he have no content in her, she is but *ὄφις ἐν κόλπῳ*, like a snake in his bosome; a continuall heart-sore and vexation to him; though a man have many children and means enough to leave them, if he have no content in them, they will be to him (as *Iacob* sayd of *Simeon* and *Levi*) a means to bring downe his
hoary

hoary head with griefe and sorrow to the grave. Let a mans table be never so richly deckt, (as *David* speakes) if he have no content in it, it is but with him, as it was with the *Israelites*, when God gave them Quailles to eate, but sent leannesse withall into their soules. All your Cupboards of plate without contentment, are but (as *Moab* was said to be *Olla lotionis*) no better than washpots, or as the Prophet expresseth it, *They are vessels wherein there is no pleasure*. In a word, there is no earthly blessing within doore or without, that is of any price, or worth, or value to a man, except it have contentment joyned with it. Therefore judge ye, whether it be not *Res pretiosa*, a rare and precious thing. If thou sepe-
rate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth (saith God, *Ier.* 15. 19.) There is a vile, a base contentment that consists in sensuality and beastly lusts, when men like Swine lye and wallow in the mire of their owne sinnes; but ther's another contentment, when a man like *Enoch* can walke with his God, and enjoy the comfort of a good conscience to himselfe; and this is that which I terme pretious.

4. Lastly, tis *Res petenda*, a thing to be prayed for. For this shall every one that is godly, make his prayer unto thee, (saith *David* *Psal.* 32. 6.) For other things the prayers of the godly differ, and very exceeding much; one prayes for faith, another for patience, another for wisdom, &c. according as every one knowes the state of his owne soule, & the necessities of his owne life: but this is such a *ωαντιστον*, such a universall good thing that every one that is godly will be sure to pray for, though they differ in other things;

in this they all agree, all their prayers jumpe and meet in this center; there is not a godly man upon earth, but he doth heartily desire of God, that if God will not give him meanes to live richly, nor health to live soundly, yet that he would give him grace to live contentedly. *Super hoc*, for this shall every one that is godly make his prayers unto thee. It is indeed a grace that comes immediatly from God, as the Apostle implyeth in the next verse to my text; having said here, *he had learned to be content*; he useth another expression there, and saith *μεμαθηται*. I am divinely taught, or *I am taught of god to be content*: it is not man teaching then, but Gods teaching, & his inward effectually working that must learne a man the art of contentation. *Non lectio, sed unctio* (as S. Bernard speakes); tis not all the reading in the world that can bring a man to it, but tis that same Anointing (which the Scripture speakes of, *1. Iohn 2.27.*) that must supple and soften a mans heart, and make him pliable to any condition. A man must be *θεοδιδασκετός* inwardly taught and wrought of God, before he can come to the true understanding and application of it to himselfe. It is true, that all other blessings besides this, do come from God, but not so immediatly as this grace doth: if a man want money, friends may supply him; if he want counsell, the Lawyers may helpe him; if he stand in neede of physicke, there be those that can do him ease; but if he want a hart to live comfortably, and grace to live contentedly, it is God alone that can furnish him therewith. Hee is the God of all grace (as S. Peter calls him, *1 Pet. 5.*); he hath the treasury, the monopoly

monopoly of it in his owne hands. Want you wisdom? want you faith? want you contentment? &c. to him you must repaire. It is *hee that giveth his beloved sleepe* (as *David* speaketh). He that would sleepe quietly, and awake contentedly, must be a suitor to God; Contentment will not come alone; tis *Res petenda*, a thing to be prayed for, and happy are we, that we may have it for praying.

And here I cannot but commend unto you the prayer of *Agur* for this very thing, *Prov.* 30.8, That holy man knew that if the world afforded any perfect contentment, it was in a middle estate, equally distant from penury and from excesse: he knew it was a hard matter for a man that is either very poore or very rich, to live contentedly: therefore he desired of God to give him neither poverty nor riches, but to feede him with foode convenient for him. That God would grant him such an indifferent, such a middling estate, that he might neither be so poore as to be despised, nor so rich as to be envied, but only so happy as to be contented: this was the summe & substance of his prayer. Give me leave, I beseech you, to make a little digression upon it; I hope it shall be no transgression, neither to your patience, nor to my purpose, because it is so agreeable and sutable to my text. There you may see the two extreames of this vertue; poverty on the one side, and riches on the other, (like the two theeves in the Gospell) and contentment (like our Saviour Christ) in the midst betweene them both.

The first extreame, or enemie to contentment, is **Poverty**, though it please God to lay poverty upon some.

some men (I suppose) for their soules good; that by being poore in purse they may learne to be poore in spirit, that so being wretched one way, they may come to be blessed another way: for *blessed are the poore in spirit, Mat. 5.* Yet you would not thinke how hard a thing it is for a man that lives very poorely, to live very contentedly. But I will give you my reasons for it, and they are four.

1. *Propter inedia*; for the famine and hunger that poore people endure in these times of dearth and scarcity, which rich ones neither feelee nor feare. As it was with *Ioseph, Gen. 37. 25.* His brethren sate down to eat and drink, & be merry, while poore *Ioseph* lay pining and starving in the pit: and to that the Prophet *Amos* alludes, blaming those that lived at ease in *Sion*, and were not sorry for the afflictions of *Ioseph*; *super contrituram Iosephi*, some render it for the threshing and flaying of *Ioseph*. How many poore *Iosephes* are there in this kingdome, that are faine to thresh and flayle; to worke and toyle from morne to night, and all they can do, all they can earne, will hardly buy bread for their poore wives and children! In all the Lamentations of *Jeremy* there is nothing more lamentable than this, *Lam. 4. 4. Parvuli panem petunt, &c.* The little children cried and died for bread, and there was not one that could breake it to them. Blessed be the Lord, it is not so in this City; your plenty, your bounty, your mercy hath provided better for poore children than so; & I doubt not, but the promise, the grace, the glory of God, will reward and crowne you for it; but let me tell you (beloved) in the country abroad, where no such provisions

visions are, you would blesse your selves to heare & see & know, how hardly the poore do fare, how wretchedly, how miserably they live; having no more, but as they say of prisoners pittances *ὡς τριῖμι ὡς ἰσὶ ἀσθενίας* *καὶ*, it will neither keepe them alive, nor suffer them to dye; so much as by the mercy of God will hold life and soule together, and that is all. And if it be an easie matter for such to be contented, judge ye: When a mans wife shall cry, his children cry, his cattell (if he be worth any) shall cry and lowe and bleat for want of food, and a man hath it not to give them.; Oh my Brethren, this cuts, this wounds, this peirces to the very heart and soule. No marvel then that *Agur* prayed to God, he might not come to poverty, *Propter inedia*, for the hunger that the poore do suffer.

2. *Propter injuriam*, for the injuries and wrongs that poore people suffer from rich oppressors, and are not able to right themselves. The Prophet *David* saith, *Psal. 10. 9. They ravish the poore when they get them into their nets.* What are the *Nets* of rich men? but their bonds, their debts, their mortgages; as Saint *Chrysostom* saith, *ῥαβμάτα προσδρατε σιδῆρε ισχυρότερα*, You bring us into writings that are stronger than any iron chains. These be the nets of rich oppressors, their writings and obligations: Now when they get a poore man into these nets, how do they use them? *David* saith, they do not only rob them, but ravish them: You know Ravishing is a dishonesty joyed with violence and cruelty: so the meaning is when they get a poore man into their debts and dangers, that he is hampered and intangled in their nets,

they use him dishonestly, and they use him cruelly too; there is neither equity nor meicy to be had in their hands. Elsewhere David termes them *and saith* *men-eaters*; Christians in name, but *Cannibals* indeede, *Psalm 14. 14. They eat up my people, as they eat bread*: they do not only nip the & bite them by their usury (as you know usury in English, is biting in Hebrew, so the word *mesback* signifieth); I say, they do not only bite them by their usury, but they devour and eat them up by their extortion: *They eat up my people as bread*, (1.) they make no more conscience to undoe a poore man, than they make conscience to eat a méesles meate when they are hungry. Beleeve it, these men are no better than murderers in Gods account, for a poore mans substance is termed his life in Scripture: in the Gospell it is said, *Mark 12. ult.* that the poore widow cast into the treasure *than 20 v. 30 v.* *Her whole life*, (2.) her whole substance. So *Luke 8. 43.* it is said of the woman that had an issue of blood 12. yeares, that she spent *than 20 v. 30 v.* *Her whole life*; meaning her whole living, upon the Physicians. They then that take away a poore mans substance, do in effect, & in Gods account take away his very life, and so are murderers. For a poore man in his house is like a snail in his shell; crush that, and you kill him. In another place it is said, *They grind the faces of the poore*: that is, they use them as cruelly & unmercifully, as if they should take a poore mans face and grind it on a grindstone. Now if this be not an enemy to a poore mans content, judge ye: therefore *Propter injuriam*, for the wrongs that poore people suffer, and cannot right themselves; *Lord (saith Agur) let men*

not come to poverty.

3. *Propter infamiam*; for the reproach, the scorne and contempt that is incident to a man of poore estate; let a poore man be never so honest, never so modest, never so vertuous; yett the world regards neither his vertues nor him, but doth *ὀφθαλμοῖς* looke over him, or disdainfully upon him, as the *Pharisee* did upon the *Publican*, *Luke 18.* when in contempt hee called him *Iste Publicanus*, this Publican, this base inferiour fellow, who was a better man to Godward than himself. *Saint James* knew the guise of the world & observed it, *Chap. 2. 2.* that if there come one into your houses *ἐν ἁγίοις ἰματίοις* with a gold ring, and gorgeous apparell, such a one is accepted and entertained with all respect; but let there come in a poore man *ἐν ὀπίθαις ἱματίοις*, in vile raiment, or in a poore habit, he is despised, and bid stand behind the doore. Looke into *Luke 15. 30.* you shall see a true image of the rich churles of these times: when the poore Prodigals wings were clipt, his meanes was wasted that he was glad to seeke reliefe in his fathers house; though his good father kindly embraced and entertained him: (as God doth all repenting sinners) yet his elder brother would not own him, but called him in disdain, this thy sonne; not this my brother, but this thy sonne, as if he had beene nothing of kinne to him, because he was growne into poverty, & driven by necessity to make bold with his friends: had he come home richly attired, or bravely attended, or sufficiently monied; then (no doubt) hee should have beene his brother, as welcome to him as to his father; but because he was beggerly, bare and poore, he was

but *et ideo* this thy sonne. O nimis inimica amicitia (saith a father) ! Oh the too friendlesse friendship of this world, that want of means should cause want of love; that a man should be valued, not according to that which he hath; but according to that which he hath not ! I beseech you take it into your consideration, whether it be not a hard matter for a man to be well contented, that shall see himselfe despised, and undervalued: and then judge whether a man hath not reason to pray as *Agur* did, Lord let me not come to poverty, *propter infamiam*, for the contempt and scorne that poore men are subject to.

4. Lastly, *propter imbecillitatem*; for the frailty and weaknesse of our corrupted nature, which is such that if our means begin to faile us, our faith in God is ready to faint and faile us too. Though God would have us live by faith, *Heb. 10. 38*. Yet alas we count that but a poore kind of living; and as long as we can either live by our means, or live by our friends, or live by our wits, or live by our shifts, as long as we can live any way, we will hardly be brought to live that way; to live by our faith in Jesus Christ. It fares with us for the most part as it did with *Hagar*, *Gen. 21. 15*. as long as her bread and her bottle held out, so long she was reasonably well content; we heare no complaint, no moane that she made, but as soone as ever these were wasted, and spent, and done; presently she falls a crying out, she was undone, she and her child must die, there was no more hope. Thus it fares with us: as long as our means and monies hold, we can be indifferently well content; God Almighty seldom heares of us; but if these be exhausted and gone,

gone, we are presently out of heart, we thinke there is no way but one with us: we and our children must perish, there is no other hope: unlesse God open our eyes, as he did the eyes of *Hagar*, to see the fountain of his goodnesse that is ever at hand to supply the poores necessities; and then we are quieted. Beloved, it is an easie matter for a man to pray for his daily bread, when he hath it in his cupbord; but when our own provisions faile us, then to rely and rest upon the provisions of God, that is the triall of a Christians faith. It is an easie matter to swim in a warme bath, every weakling, every impotent body can do that; but he that can hold up his head in a dangerous sea, when every wave is ready to absorpe and swallow him up; that is the triall of a mans strength and life: so it is an easie matter to be content in a plentiful estate, where there is no want, no lack of any thing; but for a man to be cast as it were into a sea of troubles, where so many wants like so many waves, come daily beating and breaking in upon him; then to hold up his head with content & confidence in God, there is the touchstone of an undissembled faith indeed. You that never yet felt any want, little do you know what plunges poore men are driven to in the time of need; therefore since God in mercy doth not make you to know their miseries by experience, I would have you to know it by fellow-feeling; that you may learne of *Agur* to desire of God not to bring you to poverty, *propter imbecillitatem*, for the weaknesse of humane nature, that can hardly hold out in the want of earthly means.

Thus you have heard the inconveniences of poverty,

verty, which is on extreme of this vertue: heare now
 in few words the inconvenience of Riches, which is
 the other extreme; both enemies to a mans content-
 ment. [Give me neither poverty nor riches.] By Riches
 (doubtlesse) Agur means such Riches as our Saviour
 calls *μακρυα και ιλας*, the *mammon of unrighteousnesse*,
Luke 16. 9. Riches ill gotten, by unjust, & unrighteous
 means: for otherwise Salomon tels us, *Prov. 10. 22.*
That the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth
no sorrow with it: intimating, that they which grow
 rich, and not by Gods blessing, but by such means as
 God hath accursed; the Lord doth adde such a deale
 of sorrow & care and vexation with it, that they
 were as good or better be without it. Such riches
 they were that Abraham rejected at the King of So-
 doms hand, *Gen. 14. 23.* when he offered him goods
 & spoiles enough to have enriched him and all his
 household; no (saith Abraham) I will not take so much
 as a thred or a shoole-hubbe, because it shall never be
 said, the King of Sodom hath made me rich: men shall
 never say, that Abraham was made rich not by Gods
 blessing, but by the King of Sodom: means: God shall
 make Abraham rich, or I am content still to be poore.
 It is reported of Nevissan (a better Lawyer, than ho-
 nest man) that he should say, He that will not ven-
 ture his bodie, shall never be valiant, nor he that will not
 venture his soule, be rich. let them that make no recko-
 ning of their soules, venture them at their perill; but
 let all that desire contentment here, or heaven here-
 after, make their prayer to God as Agur did, *From*
such kind of riches, good Lord deliver us. And great
 reasons may be given for it.

1. *Quis onerant*, because such kind of riches load
 & clog the soule, *Heb. 2. 6.* *was bo to him that increaseth that which is not his.* Et to him that loadeth himselfe
 with thick clay: How long? Marke what a baseness
 God gives the wealth of this world; he calls it *destru-*
lutum, thick clay; because it bemires & clogs us too.
 He that increaseth that which is not his, but hookes
 it out of other men by evil means, he must needs be
 bemired, must needs have a soule conscience of an un-
 cleane heart to Godward: and he that loadeth him-
 selfe with thick clay, must needs be clogd in his
 mind, must needs go heavily and slowly on to heaven,
 if ever he come thither with such a lading. And mark
 how the Prophet addes, *Usque quod. Et de long.* and
 there makes a stop to shew the indefatigableness
 of covetous men; though they have enough to load
 them, they can never have enough to tie them;
 though he load his house, his bags, his wife, his me-
 mory, and his conscience, yet is he never weary with
 all his lading, but still desires to take in more. As
 a ship may be over laden with gold & silver even unto
 sinking, and yet have compass and sides enough to
 hold ten times more; so a covetous man, though he
 hath enough to sinke him, he never hath enough to
 satisfie him. As a dog may have his stomach crammed
usque ad vomitum, till he cast it up againe, and yet his
 appetite is still unsatisfied, for he presently returned
 to his vomite againe: so a covetous miser, though
 he cramme his chests with gold, his garners with
 corne, his deskcs with bills and bonds; yet his lust is
 never satisfied, his mind is never wearied, which makes
 the Lord even to wonder at it, and aske *usque quod.*

How

How long? There is no end of a covetous mans desires; he never leaves clogging and lading himselfe, til he and his load perish together. Take heed therefore of ill gotten riches, *Quia onerant*, because they load the soule, and hinder it in its passage to heaven, & in that sence are an enemy to mans contentment.

2 *Quia corrumpunt*, because ill gotten riches corrupt a mans conscience, and make him worse than otherwise he would or could be. 1 Tim. 6. 9. *They that will be rich, fall into many temptations snares and lusts which drowne men in perdition and destruction.* Marke that he doth not say, they that are rich, (for a man may be *divinitus dives* divinely rich, or rich to God; I mean rich and godly too; as *Moses* is said to be *divinitus generatus*, divinely faire, or faire to God, *Ab. 7. 20.* so the originall hath it.) Neither is it said, *They that would be rich*, if God so pleased to blesse them by just and honest wayes. But they (saith the Apostle) *that will be rich*, that set downe this for their resolution, rich they will be, by right or by wrong; they are those that corrupt themselves, and runne the hazzard of their soules. It is the conceit of *Tertullian*, that even *Iudas* carried himselfe honestly and rightly *Usque ad loculorum officium*, till he came to carry the bagge, that same *procurator*, (as the Evangelists word is) *the purse or tongue*, as it signifieth; For *Iudas* thought, as all covetous men do, that the purse is the best tongue a man can use to speak for himselfe upon occasion; when once he came to that to be a master of money, he grew into such a devilish humour of covetousnesse, that rather than he would be out of takings, he would sell his very Saviour: and

a fair match he made, for (as *Austin* saith) *Iudas* sold his salvation, and the Scribes and Pharises bought their damnation, and all for a little money. No marvell the Apostle calls the love of money, the root of all evil: 'tis not ἀργύρος, the matter of money, but φιλαργυρία, the love of money, that is the root of all evil. And why the root? I think, for two causes. First, Because a root is of a spreading, of a growing nature, specially if planted in a fruitfull soyle. Such is the corrupt heart of man, if Satan can but once fasten that wicked root of covetousnesse in a mans heart, and water it as he will with suggestions, 'tis wonderfull how it will spread and grow and encrease continually more and more. Or secondly, some say it is called the Root, because it is with a man as with a tree in winter, there is sap and life in the root, when there is little or none to be seen in the branches. So in old and frosty age, when other vices and lusts decay, then covetousnesse holds life in the root, and a man will be covetous when he hath not strength to be otherwise virtuous. But why is it called the Root of all evil? for 'tis not the root of prodigality, ryot, &c. I take it, the meaning is, of all gainfull evils; if so be that ryot and prodigality were as gainfull evils as basenesse and miserable nesse a covetous man would be as inclineable to the one as to the other. Labour then to pull up this same *πίζα τῆς πικρίας* this Root of bitternesse, and desire God to plant the sweet and comfortable grace of true contentednesse in your hearts, that you may bee so farre from being carried away with the love of money, that you may account it (as the Apostle

speaks) but *σκυταλα*, but drosse, but dung, but offall, but filth and garbage, in respect of Christ and a good conscience.

3 *Quia cruciant*, because they vexe and grieve, and paine the soule. Our Saviour Christ compares them to thorns, and thorns you know are painfull things; painfull in the piercing, but more painfull in the pulling out: so are ill-gotten riches, painfull in the getting, but most painfull in the going out; when these thorns come to be pluckt out by the hand of death, that a man and his riches must part, then is the pain, then is the woe: for now mens hearts are hardned, their consciences scared; they have (as the Apostle saith *πρωπερι καρδιας*, a kind of horny-hooft growne over their soules, like the brawny hardnesse that growes upon a labourers hands, or a travellers feet, that makes them insensible of any paine: Oh but when death comes to pare off this crustinesse, and leaves nothing to stand betwixt a mans soule and his sins, then is the anguish of ill-gotten goods; when he is searched to the quick, and his life lies a bleeding, then let him say, whether ungodly riches be not painfull things. *Zophar* gives them a worse Epithet than thorns, and likens them to poysons, *Iob 20.12*. Sugred poysons go downe pleasantly; Oh but when they are downe, they gall and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder, if there be not extraordinary remedy: So do ill-gotten goods go downe like sugred poysons, and so please the palats of covetous men, that they cannot forbear them; nor will they: Oh but there will come a time of wringing, and ruing for all this. They say,

say, the *Italians* will give a man a poyson that shall not kill him till a long time after: such poysons are ill-gotten riches. Would you know the reason why they doe not trouble mens consciences now? tis because the poyson doth not yet worke; when God in judgement sets this poyson a working, which they themselves have taken long agoe, then (as the Prophet *Esay* saith Chap. 3. 9.) *Woe be unto your souls, for they have rewarded evill to themselves.* If a man should have a Diamond curiously cut into sharpe angles in his body, or in his bladder, no man would account him a rich man, but a miserable and a dead man: even such is the state of him that hath swallowed downe the guilt of ill-gotten gaine, it will one day torment him more than ever it enriched him; so that the pleasure of the one shall never countervail the paine of the other. Take heed therefore and beware of ill-gotten riches, *Quia cruciant*, though they smart not now, they will one day rend the soule.

4 *Quia pereunt*, because ill-gotten riches never prosper with a man, but perish and come to a naughty end, and that partly through the owners wickednesse, as the Prophet speaks of some that earne wages and put it in *pertusum saccalum*, into a broken bag, or into a bag full of holes and chinkes; every lust, every sinne that a wicked man is given to, makes (as it were) a chinke or a hole in his estate, whereat his wealth runs out, if it be not stopt by true repentance: and partly through the just judgement of God, that like as we see, *Marke* 11. 20. as soone as Christ had cursed the fig-tree, it presently withered and dried

up ^{in pl^{ss}} from the roots, to shew that it was not the root alone, but the blessing of Christ that did support the fig-tree: it is not all a mans care, nor all his endeavour that can keep his wealth from withering & perishing, if God from heaven give a curse unto it, as he doth to all ill-gotten goods. *Woe be to him that coveteth an evil covetousnesse to his house, Hab. 2. 9.* there hangs a judgement over that mans house, like raine in the clouds, which sooner or later will come dashing downe upon it and overwhelme it. *Fire shall consume the Tabernacles of bribery, Job 15. 34.* a man that builds his tabernacle, and raiseth his estate by bribery, and such unlawfull meanes, the Lord doth beare such hatred to that mans house, that, if Atonement be not made, he will even fire it and burne it to the ground. What a world of sudden & lamentable fires are there every day in some place or other? who can tell but that God doth fire such houses for the bribery and iniquity of the owners and founders? You know that fire may be given to a train of Gunpowder, a great way off from the place to which the blow is intended; so may judgement be breeding a long time ere it breake out, it may hover a long time ere it light: therefore as you tender your owne safety, take heed of getting riches by ill courses, *quia pereunt* because they perish and come to a naughtie end. And wilt thou perish (saith *Austine*) for that which perisheth? God forbid.

5 Lastly, *quia damnant*, because without Gods infinite mercie they damne a mans soule eternally. The Apostle Paul is direct, *Rom. 3. 8. They which doe evil that good may come of it, their damnation is just.*

Now

Now wherefore doe men filch and steale, cozen and deceive, defraud and over-reach, and do all manner of evill? is it not that good may come of it, that they may get goods by it? If it be so, then make the inference your selves, whether such mens damnation be not just. But I dare not dwell upon this uncomfortable point, I know it is beside my text; let mee intreat you in a word, and so I have done with it: that seeing riches ill gotten are so dangerous to the soule, and so great an enemy to a mans contentment; that you would remember *Agurs* prayer, and desire no more of God but that which is good and meanes convenient for you; and that is only so much as you may get justly, use soberly, enjoy thankfully, distribute cheerefully, and live contentedly.

You have heard the two extreames of this vertue (Poverty and Riches); now the meane is that where true contentment rests, that is, when God fits a man with such an estate as is most meet, and most convenient for him (*feed mee with food convenient for mee, saith Agur,*) when a mans heart and his estate doe *convenire*, meet and agree, and comply in one; ther's the contentment that my text speaks of: when God fashioneth a mans heart to his meanes, as *David* speakes, *Psal. 33. 13, 14, 15. The Lord looketh downe from his habitation, upon the men of the earth, and he fashioneth their hearts every one of them;* as a sute of cloathes is fitted to a mans body, so doth God fashion a good mans heart to his estate, and makes it futable, fit and convenient for him, and this is it that gives him content: for when there is an unsutable-
ness, a disproportion, a disagreement, betwixt a mans

minde and his meanes, he can have no content, no comfort in it; as we see by *Abah*, and by *Haman*, and divers others, who wanted for no meanes, yet because their hearts did not *Convenire* did not comply and agree with their estates, see how discontentedly they lived and dyed. If then thy estate be not according to thy minde, desire of God (as *Agur* did) to fashion and fit thy minde and heart to thy estate, that they may *convenire*, concord and comply one with the other; then shalt thou have content in it, be it more or lesse. You must know, it were as easie to God, to give a man plenty as poverty; health as sicknesse, peace as trouble; all were one to him to give a man great meanes as little; but onely that he sees the one more convenient for some men than the other, and accordingly dispenseth his favours. He is *υπερβολος* the knower and searcher of the heart, and sees that some man if he had more, it would make him proud, if he had lesse it would make him repine; he sees that every man hath not wisdom, nor humility, nor heavenly mindednesse enough to concoct a more plentiful estate, and therefore he fits every one with such an estate as is most futable, most convenient for him. Doe not therefore thinke hardely of God because he straitens thee and cuts thee short in many things which thou desirest, but know that God knowes thee better than thy selfe; Remember what title *S. Paul* gives to God. *1 Tim. 1. 17. To God onely wise be glory and immortality*. If we did but consider that God is *υπερβολος* onely wise, it would be a great stay to our minds, and a great helpe to our contentment; But here's the

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the mischiefe, we thinke our selves wise too, nay I may say it, we thinke our selves as wise or wiser than God; we are of *Alphonfus* his minde, who feared not to say, *Si in principio mundi ipse Deo adfuisse, multa melius ornatusque condenda fuissent*, if he had beene with God in the beginning, things should have been contrived in an other manner than now they are: so doe we blasphemously thinke, that if God would but take our counsell, and be ruled by us, things should be carried in another manner than now they are; that some should not have so much, others so little, some all, others never a whit: thus wee wretchedly and blasphemously thinke our selves as wise, or wiser than God, and thats the reason wee are not content with his dealing; whereas if we did consider that God were onely wise, and none were wise but he, this would make us resigne our selves to him, submit our wills to his, and say as *Ely* did, *It is the Lord, let him doe whatsoever seemeth good unto him*, for whatsoever seemeth good to him, cannot but be good, howsoever it seemes to us. Doe but thus thinke, thus beleve, thus conceive of God, and that's the way to be content.

I have done with the first generall part of my Text, which was *disciplina pacis*, the discipline of peace, and therein you may learne what a happinesse it is to be Content, (or as the word signifieth) to be selfe-sufficient. I come now to the second, and that is *pax disciplina* the peace of this discipline, or the profit of this learning; and therein you shall see, how I for my part, You for your parts, and every one for his owne part, may doe to attaine unto this happinesse,

happineffe, and learne for our owne particulars to be contented with our owne estates. My Text you see, is generall and comprehensive, and doth extend and enlarge it selfe, not to any one estate or condition of life, but to all conditions, and to all estates whatsoever: For if contentment consisted or rested onely in nobility and greatnesse, what should become of the meener multitude, how should they be Content? if it consisted in ease and pleasure, how should they be content that worke and labour; if in costly apparell and dainty fare, what a case were they in that goe poorely and fare hardly; In a word, if contentment were limited and confined to any one condition, if it were included and shut up in any one estate, what should become of all the rest? But the comfort is, that God in mercy hath so divided, and dispersed and diffused this grace into all estates of men, that in whatsoever state a man is in, through Gods blessing and his owne endeavour, he may be contented with; the poore man as content as the rich man, the husbandman as the Gentleman, and the Subject as content as the King. *I have learned* (saith S. Paul, like a *tetragonismus* or a Die that fals square which way soever it lights) *In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be Content.*

Thus farre in generall; I come now to particulars. As God charged his Prophet, *Ezek. 14. 4.* to answer them according to their Idols; goe no further than their owne case, and speake home to that; so give me leave to lay before you certaine particular cases of discontent, which are or may be your owne cases in particular, and when I have answered you accord-

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ing to them, when I have satisfied and shewed you how they may be borne with a contented minde, *ἐχέτω* I have done. The cases are sixe.

1. *Moses* case, to be crost in ones wife, as he was by *Zipporah*. 2. *Elies* case, to be crost in ones children, as he was by *Hophni* and *Phinebas*. 3. *Iosephs* case, to be crost in ones reputation, as he was by his mistresse. 4. *Mephiboshebs* case, to be crost in ones friends and meanes, as he was by *Ziba*. 5. The Cripples case, *Iob*. 5. to be crost in ones preferment and hopes, as he was, for he lay at the poole of *Bethesda* 38. yeares, yet still one or other crost him, and stept in before him. 6. *Hezechias* case, to be crost in ones departure out of this world, to be called to dye (as he was) at such a time when a man desires most to live. These six, in my opinion, are the principall cases, and the chiefeest causes that are (as *Aristotle* speakes) *ποιήτικα λυπη* the makers and breeders, the provokers and procurers of griefe, displeasure, and discontent, I will but strike these severall flints with a touch and away, and I hope in God that each of them will afford you a sparke to inlighten my Text; and to shew you the way to be content.

As *Iacob* when he blest the sonnes of *Ioseph*, *Gen*. 48. blest them with a crosse, crossing his armes (as you may see by the Text :) so the greatest blessing that ever came into the world, came by a crosse (the crosse and passion of our blessed Lord and Saviour;) and there is no man living so blest of God in this world, but he hath some crosse or other to keepe him humble, and the most usuall are these;

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1. *Moses*

1. *Moses* case, to be crost with a *Zipporah*, with an ill-tongued wife: or *Abigails* case, to be crost with a *Naball*, with an ill-conditioned husband; we will put them both together, because this crosse is like an *Amphisbana*, a Serpent with two heads, which bites both wayes, and stings at both ends; and there must be a redresse on both sides, or there can be no contentment on eyther: As the Poets feigne of *Venus*, that she brought forth a sonne, and called his name *Ἔρως* Love; this sonne of hers would never thrive nor come to any growth, till she had brought forth another sonne, and she called his name *Ἀντίρως* as you would say *love for love*. Thus stands the case betwixt a man and his wife; they are like *Ἔρως* and *Ἀντίρως*, the love of the one will never grow nor thrive without the love of the other. If there be not a reciprocal affection, a mutuall endeavouring to give each other content, their life will proove rather *Coniugium* than *Coniugium* (as one said) rather a warfare, then a welfare, and they shall live in the family as *Jacob* and *Esau* did in the wombe, and doe nothing but wrestle and struggle for superiority; which is a hatefull life both to God and man. Well, but if it be thus, that a man or woman be thus crost; what is to be done in such a case? I answer there is no way but one, and that's it my Text speakes of, onely to learne to be Content. But yet there is a course to be taken for that, and it is this. *David* tells us in the *Psalme*, that it is God that maketh them that are in one house to be of one heart: if therefore any discontent arise in a family, the onely way is, to have recourse to heaven by humble and earnest prayer, and God

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will worke a peace twixt man and wife. Wee see in *Genesis*, as long as *Adam* and *Eve* lived at one with God, they lived at one among themselves; but so soone as they were divided from God by sin, they became divided among themselves by discord; *Adam* falls a blaming of *Eve* and accusing her to God, in whom before he rejoyced as bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh: So marke it where you will, seldome doe man and wife fall out among themselves, but first they are fallen out with God; and seldome agree except God hath a hand in it. The Hebrewes observe that Gods Name (*Iehovah*) and mans and womans name (*Isb* and *Isbah*) begin both with one & the same letter; now if you take out the first letter of Gods name from a mans and womans name, nothing remaines but *Esb* which signifieth fire. This is the true reason why there is so much fire; I meane so much unkinde and unnaturall flames of contention betwixt man and wife; onely because God is left out, the Lord is not betweene them. Therefore the onely way to bring peace and unity into a family, is to bring God into the family; and the onely way to bring God into a house, is to bring him and draw him in by prayer. Draw neare to God, and God will draw neare to you (saith *S. James*.) Be not you wanting to God, and God will never be wanting to you; Alwayes remember the Apostles farewell to the *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 13.11. *Be of one minde, live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you.* Thus doe as God would have you, and that is the way to be content.

2. *Elies case, to be crost in ones children.* Put case

thy children be either taken from thee by untimely death, in their youth; or, which is worse, live to be ungracious and undutifull to thee in their age: these are piercing griefes; yet learne to be content in both. For the first, say that Almighty God, who hath *In vita & necis*, the power of life and death in his owne hands, and can draw out, and cut short our lives as it pleaseth him, doe cut off thy child in the budding, in the blooming of his age, when he is *Aurora filius* (as the Poet speakes) a sonne of the morning, so that all thy joy, thy hope, thy comfort, seemes to perish and die, and be extinguisht in him: yet learne to be content, for why? Consider, that if thy child had lived, he must have served an apprenticeship all the while, that he might after have beene free of the heavenly *Ierusalem*: now if God in his mercy will grant it the freedom in the beginning of its yeares, and make him a citizen among the Saints shortly after he came into the world, is this any cause of discontent? and not rather of thanksgiving? But who can tell whether such a child be saved or no? if I were but sure of that (will some say) I should be the better content: though I know a good parent will abhorre such a thought of doubtfullnesse, yet for the better setting of your minds in that assurance, doe but call to minde our Saviours saying, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for unto such belongeth the Kingdome of God*: it is not only said that they belong to Gods kingdome, but that Gods kingdome belongs to them, (as much as to say) if any have a right unto it, or may claime a part or portion in it, it is such or none: in the Originall it is,

is, τῶν γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, For of such is the kingdome of God, (that is) Gods kingdome doth consist of little children, heaven is replenished and stored with such as they. Forasmuch then as there can be no feare nor danger of thy childs salvation with God, let this teach thee to be content, if God shall take him from thee in the beginning of its dayes.

But the greatest crosse of all is, when children live to be ungracious and undutifull to their parents in their age (as *Elies* were) when aged parents shall be forced to complaine, as the tree did in the Apologue, that it was rent and torne and split asunder, with the same wedge that was cut out of its owne bowels; this I am perswaded is the greatest grieve that can befall a tender-hearted parent. This was the crosse that subdued *Egypt*; all the plagues of God, could not make them yeeld, till God smote their children, and that broke their hearts: so *1 Sam. 30.6.* it is said of *Dauids* men, that their soules were bitter for their children: the miscarriage of a child is gall and worme-wood to a parent, it imbitters their very soules. If thy case be thus, I bewaile and condole it: onely let me perswade thee to be content; because the God that made thy child, can mend him. Do therefore for him as *Noah* did for *Iaphet*, *Gen. 9.27.* He had given that son of his a great deale of good counsell, no doubt, and perswaded him to dwell in Gods Church, and become a lively member of the same; but knowing well to how little purpose all this would be, without Gods working upon his heart, he falls to prayer, *God perswade Iaphet to dwell in the tents of Shem*: as if he had said, I

have advised and done my utmost, to perswade thee my sonne; but all this is but lost labour, unlesse God put to his helping hand; now therefore, *The good Lord perswade thee, &c.* Thus doe thou for thy refractory child, desire God to perswade him, to convince him, to convert and turne his heart, and thou shalt see that nothing shall stand in his way, but the worke shall be accomplished. If God undertake to bring *Peter* out of prison, no bolts nor barres shall be able to hold him there; if the Lord take in hand to leade *Israel* out of *Egypt* into the promised land, sea shall be no sea, wilderness no wilderness, Giants no Giants, &c. So though thy child be never so ill-minded, never so desperately bent, if God undertake to mend him and make him good, all his ill conditions shall not hinder it: therefore let not thy heart sinke, nor thy faith faile, nor thy hopes languish, but still pray, still entreat, still waite upon God, and that's the way to be content.

3. *Iosephs* case, to be crost in ones reputation. Put case thy good name (which *Salomon* saith, is more precious than riches) be impeached and taken from thee by slanders, and lyes and base imputations of those that wish thee ill: for such is the vice and villany of the world, that they will traduce and discredit a man, whether he deserve it yea or no. *David* compares such to the *Aspe*, which is a beast ill-fighted, but quicke of hearing, weake but full of poyson; so are all detractours, ill-fighted to see any thing that's good in another, but quicke of hearing any thing that is bad of him; weake they are in iudgement and in charity both, but full of the poyson of malice

malice and envie. *The poyson of Aspes is under their lips, Psal. 140. 3.* *Iunius* translates it, *venenum pyados*, the poyson of the spitting serpent; they have learned of the old Serpent, the Devill, to spit their venome in the faces of those that faine would live in peace, and dwell securely by them: they are indeed a cursed generation, *Deut. 27. 24.* *Cursed be he that smites his neighbour in secret* (that doth secretly and slyly underhand traduce him, and seeke to worke him out of the good opinion of his neighbours and friends) and marke what followes, *let all the people say, Amen.* God doth not onely curse such a one himselve, but he gives all his people leave to curse him too: and cursed be that offence that brings the curse of God, and the curse of the people upon such an offender.

Well, if it have beene any of your hard haps to be thus secretly smitten, or openly injured in your reputations, (as some of us, I am sure, have beene) let me (as I have begun) entreate you to beare it contentedly whether you deserve it or deserve it not.

If thou doest deserve it, and that by thy scandalous life, thou hast throwne this dirt in thy owne face; then be content and be sorry for what thou hast done, and God shall repay and make up thy good name againe: we have his owne promise for it, by his owne Prophet, *Zeph. 3. 11.* *In that day thou shalt not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me:* the meaning is, that in the day of thy repentance, God will take from thee, not thy sin onely, but thy shame too. *David*
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by his great sinnes, had in a manner quite broken his good name, insomuch that his enemies began to insult and make songs upon him to disgrace him utterly; yet because he was a penitent man, God upon his repentance repayred his good name, and he dyed (saith the text) *full of riches and Honour*; first of *Chronicles*, Chap. ult: not of riches onely, but of honour too: all his dishonour was done away, and he left a reverend and renowned name behind him: when he had gotten credit with God, he got credit with men too. In a word, if thou desirest that others should speake well of thee, see thou have a care to doe well unto thy selfe, *Psal. 59. 18. Si benefeceris tibi, If thou doest well unto thy selfe, men will speake good of thee.* So that it lies in a mans selfe, it is in his own hand to make himselfe a good name or a bad one: So long as a man doth well to himselfe, (1) spends his time well, serves his God well, leades his life well, and husbands his estate well; so long he shall be sure to be well thought of, and well spoken of; but if he doe *ill to himselfe*, take an ill course, leade an ill life, and follow ill company, &c. if he be then ill-spoken of, he must thanke himselfe: and he may say to himselfe, as the heart of *Apollodorus* the tyrant seemed to say to him, who dreamed one night that he was sleade by the *Styrbians*, and that his heart cried unto him out of the Caldron, *ἔγώ σε φονεύω δαίμων*. It is I that have brought thee to all this. Therefore if thou deservest to be ill-spoken of, *amend thou thy selfe, and God will amend thy name.*

But if thou be ill spoken of, and deservest it not, though the crosse be great, the comfort is the greater, for

for doe but rest contented, and God will find a time to bring thy innocency to light. Looke how God doth with secret sinnes to bring them to light that are done in darkenesse; so will he doe by secret innocency; *Iosephs* uprightnesse was in secret, none saw it or knew it but onely God and himselfe; as for his mistresse, she accused him, belyed and slandered him, and was beleaved; poore *Ioseph* either pleaded not for himselfe, or his plea was not heard nor credited; yet God found a time to cleare it and bring it to light: so let the world raise what slanders they will, looke how he did with *Ioseph*, so will he deale with thee, for he is a God that changeth not. In the meane time, doe not take too much to heart the reproaches of thy enemies, but pray as *Austin* did, *plue mihi mitigationes in cor, ut patienter tales feram*, Oh my God, showre downe thy gentle appeasings into my heart, that I may patiently beare with such men as these; Pray (I say) to God, that hee would pacifie thy owne heart, and mollifie thy enemies hearts, and *that's the way to be content.*

4 *Mephibosheths* case, to be crost by perfidious friends and servants. I confesse it is a hard case when such as are *Viri pacis*, and *Viri panis* (as the Prophet speakes,) that eat of a mans bread, and professe friendship and love and service to a man; when they shall go about to undermine him and worke him out of favour, and out of his fortunes too: yet the world is full of such *Zibaes* that care not how they colloque, nor whom they slander for their owne private advantage: If they see a man to be a cripple (as it were) that he cannot go to speake for himselfe,

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nor come in place to answer for himselfe, and to tell his owne tale; he shall be sure to have his tale told for him, by some that he little dreamt of, that will do him a displeasure, and he shall never know who hurt him. Thus did *Ziba* deale with *Mephibosheth*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 30. yet see how patiently, how contentedly, that good man put it up; when *David* spake of dividing the land with *Ziba*, *Let him take all* (saith *Mephibosheth*) *seeing my Lord the King is come home in peace.* Here is the voyce of one that is a true servant to his God, and a true subject to his King; such a man is really content, that the devils pioneers (I meane undermining flatterers) should take all they can get, and get all they can take either by *Hophnies* *fleshbooke*, 1 *Sam.* 2. or by those Nets and Dragges that the Prophet speakes of, *Hab.* 1. 15. let them hooke, hale and drag together the Devill and all (as some I thinke will doe:) A contented man had rather with *Mephibosheth* loose all, part with all, and be stript of all he hath, so he may but have leave to enjoy the favour of his God, the safety of his Sovereigne and the peace of his owne conscience to himselfe. Well, if it be thy hard hap to be thus abused and undermined by a trecherous *Ziba*, that beares thee faire in hand, and secretly endeavours to worke thee out of all; yet learne of *Mephibosheth* to be content though thou goest by the worse; and desire of God as *David* did to stand thy friend in such a case; *sponde pro servo tuo, in bonum, Answer for thy servant in the thing that is good, Psal.* 119. 122. as if he had said; Lord thou hearest and seest how unjustly I am calumniated and evill spoken of

in many places, where I am not, nor may not come to answer for my selfe, therefore Lord, doe thou answer for me, or stirre up some good body to plead my cause, and speake in my behalfe. *Subarrha servum tuum* (so some translate it) be surety for thy servant; if they will not beleieve mee, nor give credit to my words when I speake in my owne defence; be thou O Lord, a surety for me, passe thy word for my truth and sincerity, for thou knowest my cause is good. *Be surety for thy servant in the thing that is good.* Thus doe, see thy cause be good, thy conscience cleare, thy heart unguilty of the great offence, and then commend thy case to God, let God alone to answer for thee, *And that is the way to be Content.*

5 The cripples case, *Ioh. 5.* to be crost in ones preferment, as he was that lay 38 yeares at the poole of *Bethesda*, waiting for a good houre, and still one or other stept in before him, and intercepted him of his cure, and put him by from all his possibilities and hopes. And this is the great *Cor-dolium* the very heart-ake and grievance of many a worthy man, many a worthy Scholler, that hath lyen a long time at the poole of the Church and Court, hoping at length to climbe up that same *Aditu. uero* (as the Apostle calls it, *1 Tim. 3. 13.*) that good step or stay to honour and preferment, that others have done, and still one or other steps in before him, intercepts him of his hopes, and casts him downe as low as ever his expectations raised him up. If this be any of your cases, I shall give you no other counsell then I desire of God to take my selfe, and that's this; to learne of that Cripple to be content for a

time, to tarry Gods leifure, to attend still at the pool (I meane at the ordinances of God) and you shall see at length, that if Angels cannot helpe you, Christ himfelfe will come and doe a cure upon you, and rather worke a miracle than your faith should be difappointed, or your hope should make you a-shamed. In the meane time you must know, that there is a speciall difpensation of God in his dealings with fome of his fervants, *Num. 12.7. My fervant Moses is not so* (saith God) *he is faithfull in all my house, unto him will I speake mouth to mouth.* Here was a speciall favour, that God would shew to Moses, which he would not shew to every one that was faithfull in his house. You see *Matth. 17.* when Christ was transfigured upon the mount, he tooke but three of his Disciples with him, and left the rest behind, who yet were as neare and deare, and as good Disciples as they. Afterwards, *Matth. 27.* when Christ arose from death, it is said, that *many of the Saints arose to attend him*; Many Saints, not all; others that had beene as holy and as sanctified men as they, stayed still in their graves, and their bodies lay in the dust expecting glory. Thus doth God still deale with his fervants; some he raiseth up to wealth and honour and preferment, other some he depresseth and holdeth downe with poverty, want and neede, who yet no doubt are as true and faithfull fervants to God as they that are advanced. Salomon tells us, *Eccles. 9. 11.* The race is not to the swift, nor the battell to the strong, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of knowledge: his meaning is that men of greatest abilities,

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men of greatest sufficiencies are oft times kept low, when others that are but *Gregarii ordinis* to our thinking, are advanced and lifted up. This is to learne us to be content with our estates, because they are of Gods assignement and designation. Content (I say) not onely by constraint, but willingly (as the Apostle speakes in another case;) for you know there is a twofold contentment: *Voluntary*, and *Involuntary*. The *Involuntary* is when a man is content with his estate, against his will, because he cannot helpe it. As *Simeon* of Cyrene, *Matth. 27.32.* submitted himselfe to beare the crosse of Christ, because he was *Angariatus* compelled and forced to it (as the Text sheweth:) this is a thanklesse and fruitlesse contentment, *virtus nolentium nulla est*: God takes no pleasure in forced patience; patience perforce hath small thanks with God. But it is the *Voluntary contentment* which proceeds *ab intrinseco* from an inward working of grace, from the same *free spirit* that *David* speakes of, *Psal. 51.* when a man doth voluntarily, freely and of his owne accord endeavour to worke himselfe to an *εὐταξία* to an inward selfe-sufficiencie, whether his estate please him or no, as they did, *Ier. 42.6.* *whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voyce of the Lord, &c.* Not onely when Gods will and ours sute together, but when there is an utter disagreement betwixt them: then to be content without constraint, is thankworthy with God. You see by experience, A man that comes to an *Inne*, if he can get a better lodging and better attendance, he will; if he cannot, yet he will be content with it; for why? He con-

siders it is but for a night, and he is gone: thus wee come into the world as it were into an Inne, which is a place of passage, no place of abode; if we can get a better estate or a better condition, use it in Gods name; if not, yet *learne to be content*, for why? it is but for a night, for a short space, and you are gone. And so I come to the last case of all, and that is,

6. *Hezekiahs* case, to be crost in ones departure, to be called to die at such a time, when a man desires most to live: when God shall shorten a mans dayes in his journey (as *David* speaketh) and take a man away in the midst of his age, in the minority of his children, in the unsetlednesse of his estate; this of all the rest may seeme the heaviest crosse; yet learne of *Hezekiah* to be content to live as long as God will spare thee, and when God will have thee, be content to dye. When a loving mother sendeth forth her child to nurse, and the nurse hath kept it long enough; if the mother thinke good to take home her owne child againe, hath the nurse any cause to grudge or complaine? how much lesse cause have wee to shew any token of ungodlinesse and discontent, that God should take home our departing soules, the worke of his owne hands, the plant of his owne grafting, who renders it more than a mother doth her child, and will keepe it better and safer for us, than we can keepe it for our selves? It is said of *David*, *As. 13. 35.* *when he had served his time, by the will of God, then he fell asleepe and was gathered to his fathers.* Every one hath his time set him, to serve God in this world, some a longer, some a shorter time, as it pleaseth God to predetermine

predetermine and set it downe: now when a man hath served his time (as *David* did) and done that he came for into the world, I meane when he hath repented of his finnes, reformed his wayes, provided for his family, and made heaven and salvation sure to his owne soule; if then it shall please God to send forth that same *Angelum mortis* (as the Hebrewes speake) the Angell of death, to call him home, and fetch him into his fathers kingdome: what just cause hath such a one to take *Iobs* wives counsell, in the best sence, and even to *blesse God and dye*? It is a lamentable case when a man must die whether he will or no, when God comes to pull away a mans soule, (as *Iob* speaks) *Iob 27. 16. what hope hath the hypocrite, when God comes to pull away his soule*? Iust as you see when a great fish is taken with an angle, the man pulls, and the fish pulls, and the man pulls againe, and by force of armes twitcheth it out of the water: thus it fares with an hypocrite (saith *Iob*) when he is taken as it were with the angle of God, I meane with some mortall sicknesse, that God begins to pull at his soule, and twitch it out of his body whether he will or no; then *quænam spes*? where is the hope of the Hypocrite? alas his hope is gone. The like expression you have *Luke 12. 20. God Almighty saith to the rich man, Thou foole, this night they shall fetch away thy soule*; as if he had said, I know thou art loth to part with thy soule, loth to forgoe it, but that shall not serve thy turne; there will come those that will take it by force, and fetch it from thee whether thou wilt or no, *οὐδὲ ἀπαρτίσουσιν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ*, they shall never aske thee leave,
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but shall wrest and wring it from thee, into such a place, such a company, such a condition, as I am afraid to mention. I have not now time (as the Greekes say) ταύτην τὴν ἀφορρὰν βαλὰν to beate this Oake for any more Acornes, nor to list my text for any more observations: onely in a word, If you desire to die contentedly, let your care and endeavor be to live conscionably; then let death come when it will, it shall be no otherwise than a mid-wife (as *Naz.* speaks) to deliver you and helpe you out of the paines of earth into the joyes of heaven: then when you die you shall live, when you goe from men you shall goe to God, when your eyes are closed on earth, they shall be opened againe in heaven.

Thus according to my weake ability I have done with my text, and shewed you *the way to be content.* God of his mercy give a blessing unto it, for Iesus Christ his sake, to whom with the Father and the holy Spirit, be given and ascribed all honour and glory; be done and performed all service and duty, this day and for ever, Amen.

FINIS.